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(54) Finger stall for wiping infants' teeth

(57) A dental care article, especially suitable for cleaning babies' teeth, comprises a soft woven or non-woven finger stall of fabric (10), shaped by means of a seam (11) so as to have a closed end (12) and an open end (14) with an elasticated edge (15). A rubber or other moisture-impermeable lining is desirably also provided.

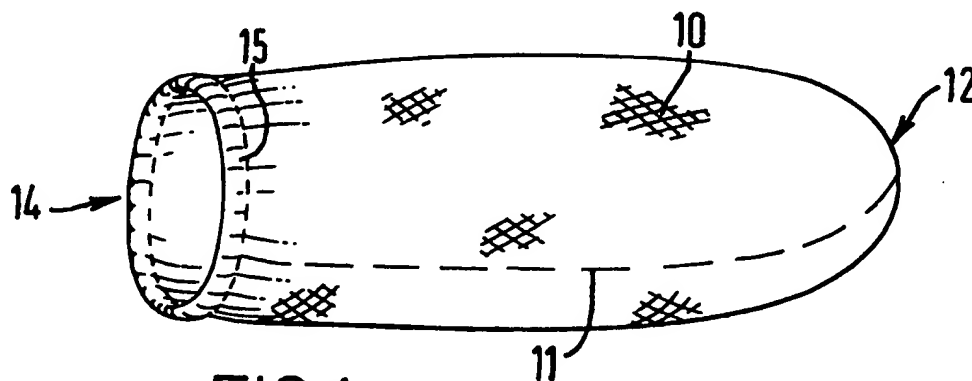
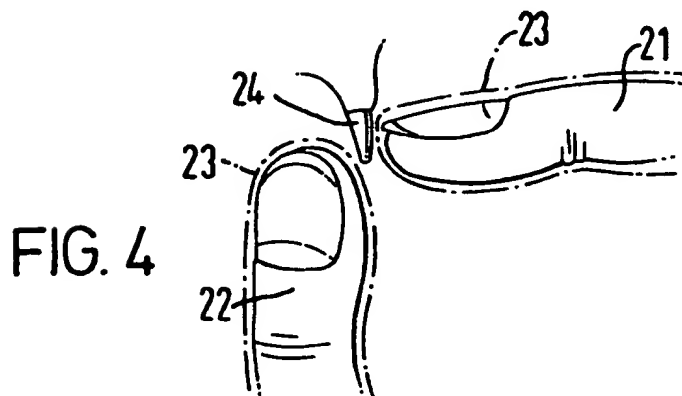
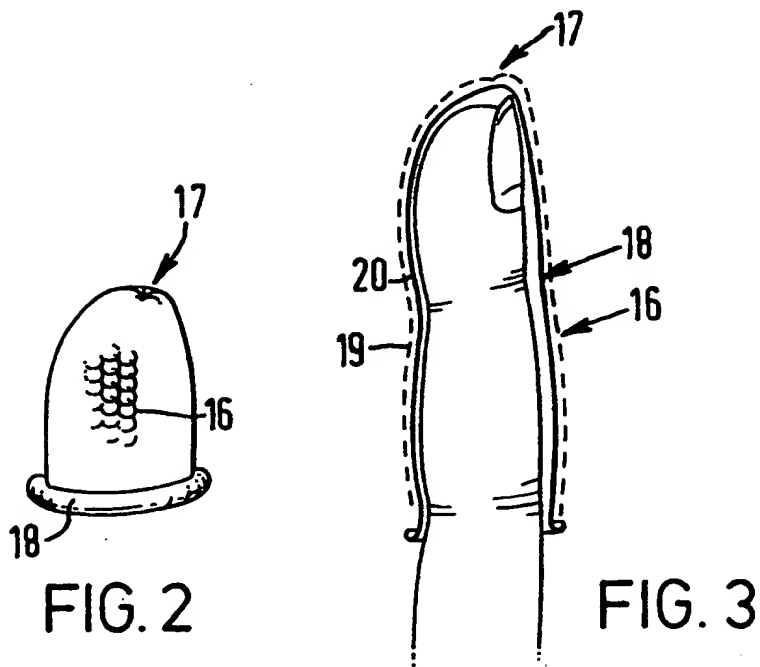
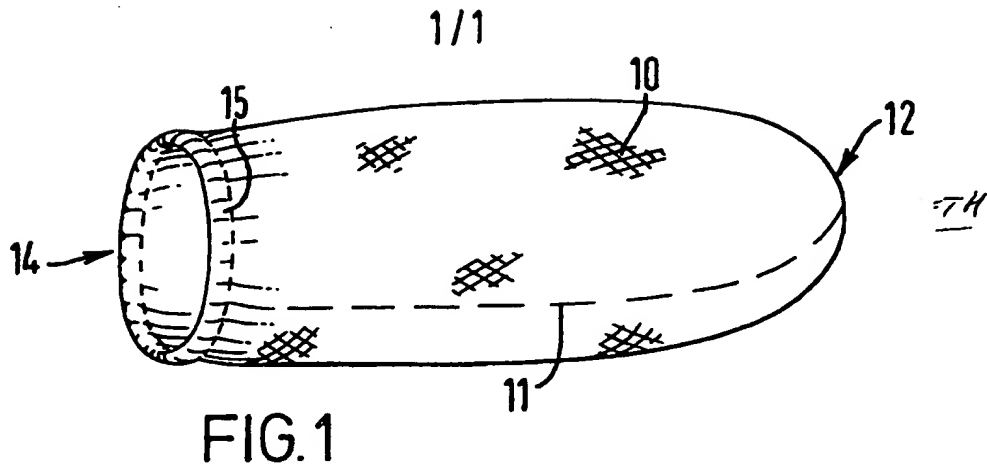


FIG. 1



SPECIFICATION

Articles for dental care

5 This invention relates to dental care and provides articles for use in cleaning the teeth. The dental care articles of the invention are especially suitable for cleaning the teeth of babies and small children, but can be made and used for any form of tooth cleaning.

10 Dental caries is extremely widespread and the promotion of oral hygiene and good dental care should begin as soon as a baby's first teeth appear. However, it is difficult even with older pre-school children to ensure that their teeth are cleaned properly and regularly with a brush, whether it is done for them or by them, and neither a toothbrush nor, in general, any other known dental care product can satisfactorily deal with the teeth of babies or young children. There is thus a need for a dental care article which can be used easily and efficiently to clean the teeth of babies and young children or, indeed, of anyone who is unable or unwilling to use a conventional brush.

25 According to this invention, a dental care article comprises a soft woven or non-woven fabric finger stall. In accordance with one preferred feature, the article of the invention comprises the fabric finger stall and an inner moisture-impermeable finger cot, forming a lining for the fabric component. This lining component can be made of fine rubber, for instance, and a preferred form of this embodiment of the dental care article of the invention has the fabric layer bonded to the rubber or other moisture-impermeable inner layer.

35 In accordance with an especially preferred feature of the invention, the soft fabric finger stall is made of a soft knitted material, for instance of cotton yarn. In another embodiment, the finger stall is made of a soft non-woven felted fabric, desirably selected so that detachment of any of its component fibres would not occur in use. Either kind of fabric naturally is chosen so as to provide the appropriate extremely mild and gentle wiping action in use, without any possibility of excessive abrasive action. Another feature of the article of the invention is the possibility of incorporation into or on to the fabric finger stall of a chemical composition of an appropriate formulation. For instance, a fluoride formulation could be incorporated, if regarded as advisable and safe for use in care of the teeth of the very young, or a toothpaste, dentifrice or other cleansing composition of appropriately mild and gentle effect and taste.

55 In order that the invention may be readily understood, preferred embodiments of it are briefly described below, by way of example only, in conjunction with the accompanying drawing in which:

Fig. 1 shows a perspective view of one form of dental care finger stall of the invention;

60 Fig. 2 shows a perspective view of another form of dental care finger stall of the invention;

Fig. 3 shows diagrammatically the finger stall of

Fig. 2 located in unrolled form upon a person's finger, ready for use;

65 Fig. 4 shows diagrammatically how teeth cleaning can be effected with the article of the invention either at the front of the teeth or at the back or, as shown, at both front and back together using finger stalls of the invention in an opposed fashion upon the forefinger and thumb.

70 The dental care article of Fig. 1 comprises a non-woven soft cotton tissue fabric 10 having opposed edges attached by a stitched or other seam 11 so as to form a pocket or stall of a size which fits easily upon the forefinger and to extend from the tip past the first and preferably also the second knuckle. The piece of fabric of the finger stall is shaped so that the seam 11 closes off the end 12 which receives the user's fingertip. At the opposite end 14, an elasticated edge 15 is provided or some other convenient form of resilient gathering is made, so that the finger stall will lightly grip the user's finger and remain in place while in use.

85 The form of article shown in Figs. 2 and 3 comprises a knitted fabric finger stall 16, for instance in the form of a length of tubular cotton jersey or like fabric, gathered together as at 17 so as to be closed at one end. The finger stall 16 is associated with an inner moisture-impervious lining 18, for instance a fine rubber finger cot shown in its unrolled state located upon a finger in Fig. 3 and comprising a one-piece moulded tube closed at one end and having a rolled edge at the other end. In order to keep the two components together prior to use, the fabric finger stall 16 is desirably rolled up with the rubber finger cot 18, as shown in Fig. 2.

90 Alternatively, as indicated above, the two layers can be bonded together and, again, the main tubular part of the composite finger stall is rolled up, during manufacture, and it is stored in this form. This also facilitates its use, as the article can be fitted over the tip of the forefinger and then unrolled along the finger into the position shown in Fig. 3, where the fabric layer is shown in broken lines at 19 and the rubber layer in full lines at 20. This construction also has the advantage that not even an older baby with many teeth and a strong impulse to bite can bite through the article. Fig. 4 shows highly diagrammatically a finger and a thumb 22, each fitted with a dental care finger stall 23 of the invention, and effecting cleaning of a baby's tooth 24.

100 The dental care articles or tooth wipes of the invention provide a safe secure and inexpensive means for extending tooth cleaning and good oral hygiene even to the very young and can readily be made as disposable items which are discarded after use. A gentle wiping action of the exposed tooth surfaces with the article of the invention is sufficient to provide thorough and effective cleaning and removal of any remaining traces of milk or other liquid or solid foods from a baby's teeth and adjacent gum surfaces. Another instance of the usefulness of the articles of the invention is in general mouth care, such as is required several times a day,

with patients who are unconscious, e.g. because of a comatose condition.

CLAIMS

1. A dental care article, comprising a soft woven
5 or non-woven finger stall.
2. An article according to claim 1, comprising a
fabric finger stall containing an inner moisture-
impermeable finger cot, forming a lining for the
fabric component.
- 10 3. An article according to claim 2, in which the
finger cot comprises rubber.
4. An article according to claim 2 or 3, in which
the fabric component is bonded to the finger cot.
5. An article according to any preceding claim, in
15 which the finger stall is made of a knitted material.
6. An article according to claim 6, comprising
knitted cotton yarn.
7. An article according to any of claims 1 to 4, in
which the finger stall is made of felted fabric.
- 20 8. An article according to claim 5, 6 or 7, compris-
ing a portion of fabric having opposed edges
attached together, the finger stall being closed at
one end.
9. An article according to claim 8, having an elas-
25 ticated edge or other resilient gathering at its other
end.
10. An article according to claim 2, 3 or 4 or any
of claims 5 to 9 as dependent thereon, in which the
finger stall and the finger cot are assembled by hav-
30 ing their open ends rolled together.
11. An article according to any preceding claim,
having a chemical composition incorporated into the
finger stall.
12. An article according to claim 8, in which the
35 chemical composition comprises a fluoride formula-
tion, or a toothpaste, dentifrice or other cleansing
composition.
13. An article according to claim 1, substantially
as described with reference to Figs. 1, 3 and 4 of the
40 accompanying drawing.
14. An article according to claim 1, substantially
as described with reference to Figs. 2, 3 and 4 of the
accompanying drawing.